



ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF PARLIAMENT OF CANADA IN THE YEAR 1892, AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

VOL II.

MONTREAL AND TORONTO, APRIL, 1893.

No. 3.

Altica Rubra

From the French

I.



DECIDEDLY he was slightly mad, my friend, Herbert MacNey. I watched him as he strode along beside me, his long, fair hair floating almost to his shoulders. In the moonlight his thin body seemed even thinner, and reminded me as he leaned upon his alpenstock, of one of those skeleton spiders we see running over a wall.

He was slightly mad, my friend, Herbert MacNey. He was full of the marvellous tales of Scotland, and had been lulled to sleep by the music of its fairy legends; and his green-blue eyes, like the lakes of his country, held in their depths a strange and mysterious charm. He was walking beside me, while a sturdy guide laden with bundles of all sizes, followed us. It must have been about nine in the evening. The moon lit up the little windows of Pontresina, the village we had just left, and the heavens above sparkled with stars. Before us lay the valley of Rosegg, with its forests of pine and larch, and there, at its end, like a white cloud, was seen the glacier and the snowy peaks which surmount it.

We meant to spend the night at the foot of this glacier. The next day before dawn, Herbert was to start on an expedition with two guides, to some one of

the mountain tops, while I remained sketching in the valley. We walked on in silence, both penetrated with the charm of this July night, neither caring to exchange a word even of admiration.

The road followed a wild stream, which tumbled its way amid masses of rock, suddenly becoming a dazzling cascade, again to disappear between huge boulders covered with moss and bush. To the right and left were groups of pine and larch, planted in picture groups by the all-skilful Gardener. The hills and dales were clothed with a soft velvety grass, while here and there, the juniper displayed its violet fruit and thorny bush, and tufts of rhododendron offered their flower-harvest to the passer-by.

The air was filled with the scent of balsam and pine, of the thyme and wood-strawberries. A light breeze from the glacier, breathed into us strength and life, and indeed, nothing could equal this night-walk in the high Alps.

As we went on towards the foot of a slope, some loose stones rattled down and rolled upon the road. MacNey stopped short with an air of defiance.

"You see," cried he, turning to me, "this is a declaration of war! The mountain wishes to warn off the imprudent visitors who are disturbing its sleep. I know it, how it hates us, and me in particular."

I said to him, laughingly :